

of the United States of America; that the manifesto is issued "in the name and by the authority of the good people" of the colonies, and that they are characterized in the first sentence as "one people."

There was at first a compact between the States. There was then no power in the central government to make a requisition upon those States which would have been complied with. Each one of those States had the others at its mercy. Each might have refused to unite in a common effort to resist invasion or repel an enemy. It was discovered that it was necessary to create a more perfect and perpetual Union; and the Convention of 1787 was called, and a Constitution was prepared to supersede in many important particulars the articles of confederation, which had failed to answer the purposes which their founders had proposed and expected they would answer. That Constitution framed by the Convention was submitted to the people, and without a single exception the thirteen colonies, *as a people*, ratified and established it.

Not only that, but there went out of that Convention which framed the Constitution, a letter unanimously passed, and sent out as a part and parcel of the Constitution, as an argument to the people, that they might understand exactly the principles incorporated in the Constitution, as an inducement for them to vote for and ratify it. Mr. Grundy said in the Senate of the United States, in debate:

"That it was not intended by the framers of the Federal Constitution that the States should retain their entire sovereignty, is manifest from the language of the letter, which was adopted unanimously by the Convention, and transmitted with the Constitution to the old Congress—the language is, 'It is obviously impracticable in the Federal government of these States to secure all rights of independent sovereignty to each, and yet provide for the interest and safety of all. Individuals entering into society must give up a share of liberty to preserve the rest.' From this it appears that the Convention well knew that the instrument they had formed deprived the States of a portion of their sovereignty, and argument is employed to reconcile the States to the surrender.

"In the same letter there is the following: 'In all deliberations on this subject, we kept steadily in our view that which appears to us the greatest interest of every true American—the consolidation of our Union, in which is involved our prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence.'"

It was determined that there should be a union of these States for the benefit of the whole States; that each State in its sovereign capacity, so far as it was concerned, should give up to the General Government for the general good, a part of that sovereignty which it otherwise would have possessed. The gentleman has quoted Patrick Henry, one

of the most inveterate, as he was one of the ablest opponents to the adoption of the Constitution; who looked upon this bug-bear of consolidation as insurmountable, before the ratification of the Constitution, and boldly asked, in the language read by my friend from Baltimore city (Mr. Thomas,) the other day:

"I have the highest veneration for these gentlemen; but, sir, give me leave to demand, what right had they to say *We, the people*? My political curiosity, exclusive of my anxious solicitude for the public welfare, leads me to ask, who authorized them to speak the language of *We, the people*, instead of *We, the State*? States are the characteristics and the soul of a confederation. If the States be not the agents of this compact, it must be one great consolidated National Government of the people of all the States."

In reply, Gov. Randolph says:

"The gentleman then proceeds, and inquires why we (the Convention of which he was a leading member) assumed the language of '*We, the people*?' I ask, why not? The government is for the people; and the misfortune was that the people had no agency in the government before \* \* \* \* \* What harm is there in consulting the people on the construction of a government by which they are to be bound? Is it unfair? Is it unjust? If the government is to be binding upon the people, are not the people the proper persons to examine its merits or defects?"

Mr. Pendleton says:

"But an objection is made to the form; the expression, '*We, the people*' is thought improper. Permit me to ask the gentleman who made this objection, who but the people can delegate powers? Who but the people have a right to form government? The expression is a common one, and a favorite one with me. The representatives of the people by their authority, is a mode inessential. If the objection be that the Union ought to be one, not of the people but of the State governments, then I think the choice of the former very happy and proper. What have the State governments to do with it? Were they to determine, the people would not, in that case, be the judges on what terms it was adopted."

Mr. Webster, that grandest mind that ever glittered in the galaxy of American statesmanship, has left on record his opinion of the reasons why the articles of confederation were superseded by the Constitution:

"It appears to me, Mr. President, that the plainest account of the establishment of this government presents the most just and philosophical view of its foundation. The people of the several States had their separate State governments, and between the States there also existed a confederation. With this condition of things the people were not satisfied,